CLAIMS

What Is Claimed Is:

1.   In a network of computing devices comprising two or more participant client computers in communication with a host computer system over a computer network, a fantasy gaming method executed by said host computer system for interaction therewith at said participant client computers, the method comprising the steps of:

    a first participant creating a first team via one said participant client computer;

    a second participant creating a second team via one said participant client computer;

    a challenge to engage in a fantasy game issued by said first team to said second team; and

    an acceptance of said challenge by said second team.

2.   The method of Claim 1, wherein said challenge step comprises said first team challenging said second team to engage in a fantasy game at a future date.

3.   The method of Claim 1, wherein:

    said acceptance step is preceded by said second team issuing a counterchallenge to said first team; and

    said acceptance step is an acceptance of said counterchallenge by said first team.

4.   The method of Claim 1, wherein:

    said challenge and said acceptance create a first duel, wherein as between said first and second teams, a victor of said first duel is determined by performance results of actual players in an actual sporting event.

5. The method of Claim 4 wherein said method further comprises:

a third participant creating a third team via one said participant client computer;

said third team engaging in a second duel with either said first team or said second team.

6. The method of Claim 5, wherein said method defines a regular season that is defined by a plurality of said teams engaging in a plurality of said duels to determine win-loss records for each said team responsive to victors and non-victors of said duels.

7. The method of Claim 6, wherein said method further defines performance classification groups of said teams, said performance classification group classifications responsive to the strength of duel schedule of said respective teams.

8. A system for providing an interactive fantasy sports game to a plurality of participants each participant wishing to form at least one fantasy sports team made up of actual players, and each participant operating a participant computing device operable to act as a client on a communications network, the system comprising:

a host controller, the host controller comprising a computing device operable to act as a server on said communications network and to communicate with said participant computing device over said communications network; and

data storage accessible to said host controller, the data storage storing information relating to performance of the players in actual competitive events, the host controller being operable:

to solicit and accept from each participant an initial selection and purchase of players to form the participants fantasy sports team; and

responsive to a request from one participant and an acceptance from another participant, to schedule a duel challenge between said participants' respective fantasy sports team.

9. The system of Claim 8, wherein said host controller is further operable to:

select a winner and a loser of said duel challenge responsive to points earned by said players on said participants' respective fantasy sports teams engaging in said actual competitive events.

10. The system of Claim 9, wherein said host controller is further operable to:

record winners and losers of a plurality of said duel challenges between a plurality of said particpants' fantasy sports teams; and

assign a hierarchical performance classification to each said fantasy sports team based on the number of duel challenges won and lost by each said fantasy sports team.

11. The system of Claim 10, wherein said host controller is further operable:

to create a playoff schedule between teams having the highest said performance classification.

12. The system of Claim 8, wherein said host controller is further operable to accept a request from one participant for a duel challenge with a non-participant.

13. The system of Claim 12, wherein said host controller is further operable to accept an acceptance to said duel challenge from said non-participant after said non-participant becomes a participant.

14. A method of providing a network-based, ad hoc duel fantasy gaming system, the method being implemented in a programmed computer comprising a processor, at least one data storage system, and communication means for communication with participant client computers over a communications network, the method comprising the steps of:

a first team creation via one said participant client computer;

a challenge to engage in a fantasy game issued by said first team to a non-subscriber;

a second team creation via one said participant client computer by said non-subscriber; and

an acceptance of said challenge by said second team.

15.   The method of Claim 14, wherein said challenge step comprises said first team challenging said non-subscriber to engage in a fantasy game at a future date.

16.   The method of Claim 15, wherein:

said acceptance step is preceded by said second team issuing a counterchallenge to said first team; and

said acceptance step is an acceptance of said counterchallenge by said first team.

17.   The method of Claim 16, wherein:

said challenge and said acceptance create a first duel, wherein as between said first and second teams, the winner of said first duel and the loser of said first duel are determined by performance results of actual players in an actual sporting event.

18.   The method of Claim 17 wherein said method further comprises:

a third participant creating a third team via one said participant client computer;

said third team engaging in a second duel with either said first team or said second team.

19.   The method of Claim 18, wherein said method defines a regular season that is defined by a plurality of said teams engaging in a plurality of said duels to determine win-loss records for each said team responsive to winners and losers of said duels.

20. The method of Claim 14, wherein said challenge step and said acceptance step further comprises a wager.